

Good-News Desk!

The Magazine of Tylers Green Methodist Church



Minister:
Rev. Vida Foday

New Series No. 141



Christmas 2019

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Message from our Minister

A little boy was somewhat perplexed by all the exchanging of presents on Christmas morning, for he had been taught in Sunday School that it was the birthday of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Finally, after a long period of silence, he asked, 'Mum, when are we going to give Jesus His present? I thought it was His birthday! Strange, isn't it, that most of us give gifts to everyone but the One whose birthday we celebrate.

Christmas means to us the most momentous event the ages have ever seen, when the Lord of Glory was born in Bethlehem in order that we might be saved from our sins. That is what Christmas is all about, and nothing can capture for us the mystery and the beauty of Christmas better than the carols we sing. They have the power to recreate in our imaginations the scenes of the first Christmas. They seem to be able to set the atmosphere -- the crowded inn, the smelly stable, the sleeping city, the great star spilling its beauty down over the waiting earth, the lonely shepherds in the field, the blazing, sudden glory of the heavenly hosts breaking through the darkness, then the contrast of the stable in a cave with the sleeping babe and the wondering hearts that come to worship and kneel before this amazing wonder, Jesus Christ born on earth.

Christmas is the opportunity for love to break out in our families, in our homes, among our friends, wherever we are, that the back of evil might be broken in our individual lives and we be set free to be the loving creatures God made man to be. That is why Christmas is always associated with warmth and love and joy and forgiveness, with healing and beauty and light and glory; and this is what brings joy and gladness to every heart at Christmas time.

God has given us the greatest gift in the form of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and it is only reasonable that that we should pre-

sent ourselves to the Father. When we give ourselves, we give the one Christmas present that truly fits the occasion!

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;

Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;

Richer by far is the heart's adoration;

Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

H&P 123 v4 by Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With love and blessings.

Vida

NOTICE BOARD & DIARY

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP:

2nd December at 2.30 pm at 131 Cedar Avenue

16th December at 2.30 pm - 54 Coppice Farm Road

As usual Rev'd Angela will be leading and we will be studying some of the well known stories of the Bible.

COFFEE MORNING: Saturday, 14th December at 10.00 am

Come along for a morning of Christmas Carols, Mince Pies and a few surprises as well!

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY:

There is just one meeting on **11th December** at 3.45 pm in the Church Lounge. We will be recapping on what we have studied and learned from Nehemiah.

Christmas Message

Away in a manger the baby lay,
No blankets or pillows – just some hay.
Shepherds watching their flocks by night
Angels appear midst blinding light.

Wise men travelling from afar
Following a guiding star,
Herod filled with rage within
Planning to kill this new born king.

What can this mean for us today?
Just a story some would say,
Perhaps we need to think it through,
A Saviour born – for me, for you?

By Megan Carter

Wycombe Homeless Connection

Please remember that on 2nd January 2020 the Winter Night Shelter run by Wycombe Homeless Connection begins its work. Please pray for all the churches that host the Shelter, including Wesley Methodist Church; the volunteers and support team and for all the homeless who are referred for assistance. WHC are always eager to hear from people who would like to help and if you are interested, why not visit their website for details or give them a call on 01494 447699.

The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape – cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.

Editor: Nigel Beeton writes: 'I'm often struck by the fact that the events of that first Christmas would have passed almost unnoticed by the man in the street. The angels appeared in the night to shepherds out in the hills; Jesus was born up a back alley behind a pub that most people probably didn't even know was there. Was the star even distinguishable from the planets that people were used to seeing? Who actually knew what was happening?

Who Knew?

Who saw the man and pregnant girl
Pressing through the crowded street
Struggling through the human swirl
On tired legs and aching feet?
Who knew?

Who heard her cries, in labour's pain
Deep within a battered shed?
Who cared for their impoverished shame
Who thought about her grassy bed?
Who knew?

Who, listening to an infant's cries
Hearing a birth, they thought it strange?
Expressed an int'rest, or surprise?
Who recognised that awesome change?
Who knew?

Who saw the shepherds rush along
Through sleeping streets at dead of night?
Who heard the angels' glorious song?
Or saw the star that shone so bright?
Who knew?

Who, fighting through the Christmas throngs
Or, settling down to watch TV
Eats Christmas food, sings Christmas songs
Who can the coming Saviour see?
Who knows?

The man who married Mary

The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance. After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise Men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile? For he is a man to be remembered.

Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth. 12 years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, only to find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!

Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph's life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named, and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord's teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as 'Father', knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others

mattered little. Before Jesus began His ministry, it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of His father's responsibilities before He left home.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God's will is the most important thing in life. May we, this Christmas, respond to God's call to us and please Him in all that we do.

Christmas is a time for giving...

... and we do it well. The British have been ranked among the most generous nations in the world, after a recent study found that six out of ten of us have helped a stranger in the past month.

The research, which surveyed 1.3 million people in 128 countries over a decade, found that despite a growing culture of charitable giving, there has been a downward trend in thoughtful behaviour in many of the world's wealthiest places.

However, the report, commissioned by the Charities Aid Foundation, found that the UK now appears 7th in the worldwide rankings for generosity.

60 per cent of us have helped a stranger in the last month, with 71 per cent of us giving money to charity, and 30 per cent offering even our time, in order to help a good cause.

The countries which topped the global rankings are: United States, Myanmar, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Canada. At the bottom of the table, ranked lowest in terms of generosity, were the State of Palestine, Serbia, Yemen and Greece. China was ranked the least generous of all nations.

**Did you hear about the bakery that was burgled at Christmas?
Everything was stolen!**

The Lion Nativity Colouring Book (Lion Children, £4.99)

Join the colouring craze and add a splash of colour to the story of Christmas with the beautiful and intricate black and white line drawings, just waiting for your creative input! Follow the Nativity scene by scene until you have a stunning masterpiece – your own personalised picture book.

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that “when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son...” The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did? **6**

Many biblical scholars believe that the ‘time had fully come’ for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire’s sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into ‘enemy territory’ or needing a ‘passport’. For the first time ever, it was possible for ‘common’ people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed ‘fully come’

I remember....

Our Christmas dinners from the 1950s. Usually the meat was either a capon or a goose we had raised from a chick specially for the Christmas table and cooked overnight in the slow oven of the Aga. During the 1960's the turkey had become the norm in our rural village as we now had a free-range turkey farm in the field beyond our garden. The field was owned by Mary Hardwicke and her husband Charlie Hare, both Wimbledon tennis stars of the 1930s. *Peter Stevens*

Thought for the month

How do you gift wrap love? The nearest you will ever get to that is what Mary did when the child was born - she 'wrapped him in swaddling clothes.

Ian Gregory



A Christmas Prayer

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God, the Lamb. All Your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

by Daphne Kitching



And finally...

At a clearance sale, the wife of a senior judge found the perfect green tie to match one of her husband's sports jackets. Soon after, while the couple was relaxing at a resort to get his mind off a complicated cocaine-conspiracy case, he noticed a small, round disc sewn into the tie. The judge showed it to the police, who were equally suspicious that it might be a 'bug', planted by the conspiracy defendants.

The police took the tie away for some serious analysis. A few days later, the judge phoned Scotland Yard to find out the results of their tests. "Well, we're not really sure where the disc came from," the police told him. "But we did discover that if you press it, it plays Jingle Bells."

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Minister: Rev. Vida Foday* - 📞 562788 (Vida's day off is Friday)

Worship Leaders: Geraldine Nelson* and Chris Oxby*

Senior Church Steward/LP : Peter Stevens*— 📞815256

Church Stewards:

Toyin Akinwale— 📞 817792

Martin Hellewell— 📞 816168

Geraldine Nelson – 📞 815631

Chris Oxby – 📞 814982

Communion Stewards

Angela Davis — 📞 671836

Rosemary Newman — 📞 461492

Jenny Crayford — 📞 812546

Church Treasurer : Geraldine Nelson - 📞815631

Church Council Secretary: Sue Horley Sue.horley1@gmail.com

Room Bookings: Geraldine Nelson – 📞 815631

Pastoral & First Steps: Rosemary Newman— 📞 461492 and Christine Stevens - 📞815256

Property : Peter Stevens— 📞815256

* Church Leadership Team

Church Premises

Please mention anything requiring attention to any of the
Property Stewards: Peter and Christine Stevens,
Martin Hellewell or Rosemary Newman.

**ITEMS FOR THE NEXT GOOD NEWS DESK TO PETER
BY 22nd DECEMBER PLEASE. NEW ISSUE IN
CHURCH ON 12TH JANUARY 2020**



SERVICES DIARY - SERVICES AT 10.45 a.m. unless otherwise stated.

Date	Preacher/Service Details	Vestry Steward	Org	Welcome Stewards <small>If you are unable to do your turn <u>please arrange cover!</u></small>
1st Dec	Nigel Sweet	Chris Oxby	No	Christine Stevens & Jenny Crayford
8th	Peter Stevens	Geraldine Nelson	Yes	Angela Davis & Chris Oxby
15th	Rev Nick Thompson—Holy Communion	Martin Hellewell	Yes	Christine Stevens
22nd	Annual Carol Service with seasonal Bible readings	Geraldine Nelson	Yes	Margaret Hallam & Rosemary Newman
Christmas Day	At 10.00 am - Short Family Service led by Rev Vida Foday	Peter Stevens	Yes MN	Christine Stevens
29th	Peter Stevens	Toyin Akinwale	No	Christine Stevens
5th Jan	Rev Angela Singleton	Chris Oxby	Yes	Christine Stevens & Jenny Crayford